

## Letter to Gunnison City Council

April 21, 2015

Several years ago senior citizens of Gunnison recognized the need to provide opportunities for seniors to socialize and recreate in order to maintain health and a good quality of life. They gathered together giving of their own finances to make sure this endeavor succeeded. Boomers and Beyond was born. The response validated their efforts and resulted in the need for a permanent senior center. Dan Ampietro graciously offered the Community Center as a possible site. Through much hard work and the support of many citizens of Gunnison, the matching funds necessary for the grants to be awarded were raised to build a Senior Center. We are now ready to build that facility. Without those matching funds it is doubtful that the grants received would have been written.

We are meeting with you tonight because of apparent differences in philosophy between the Boomers organization and the administration of the Community Center. We have had many meetings with Dan Ampietro over the last 18 months and expanded that to a meeting with Dan, Ken Coleman, and Stu Ferguson on Feb. 6. After much discussion, Stu volunteered to take his notes and see where we all might compromise to solve some of the issues. We did not hear any response from Mr. Ferguson before receiving another MOU on March 13 from the Dan saying that this MOU was basically the same as their initial one. **Boomers see this process of building and operating a facility as critical to meeting the needs of the senior population. Administration of the Community Center and perhaps the city administration appear to want the seniors to meet the needs of the facility.** This gives rise to issues concerning ingress/egress, membership fees, use of the space, and commitment to the success of the senior center.

Success of the senior center depends upon ease of access for all and a push to brand that space as the Senior Center not a multi-purpose space, recognizing that evening activities may be focused on more than seniors. If we want all seniors to be able to drop by for a cup of coffee, play a game of bridge, meet together to plan an event, ask questions about what activities and senior services are available in Gunnison, then it should be easy to enter their space without wondering if the door is unlocked or if some other group is in there. It also means that visiting only the senior center does not mean that they are then committed to joining the Community Center. If they want to commit further and pay for classes and activities and join the Community Center they are encouraged to do so.

Gunnison has a growing number of local seniors retiring and planning to stay here. We also have a very large number of summer "residents" who find Gunnison a great place to be. We need to have attractions including a Senior Center to make it more pleasant to stay and keep coming back.

Boomers and Beyond MOU and Building Committee

Don Crosby, Betsy Janney, Rogene McKiernan